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sistence and a courage bordering on heroism. Let us hear Nansen (p. 613): "We had no lantern for the reading of the thermometer, and I tried in vain to construct one which would not burn more oil than we could afford to use. But our eyes, of course, became gradually trained to see in the dark, and even in midwinter, with no moonlight, there was so much light (star-light?) reflected from the snow that the column of the darkly-coloured metaxylol was dimly visible, and also the figures of the thermometer-scale, but not the division marks. . . . I do not, therefore, consider it advisable to pay too much attention to the temperature observations during the darkest time, December and January, when the moon was not above the horizon."

Let this quotation, which expresses the spirit of the volume before us, serve as a conclusion to a very inadequate notice of one of the most important recent publications in meteorological science. R. DeC. W.

The Saint Lawrence, its Basin and Border-Lands. The Story of their Discovery, Exploration and Occupation. By Samuel Edward Dawson. xl and 451 pp., 42 woodcuts and half-tone illustrations, including early Maps, Bibliography, Index, and large Map in Colours. Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, 1905. (Price, $1.60.)

Dr. Dawson is well known for his earlier geological writings. The present book is his most comprehensive work. It is a thorough, critical, and interesting study of the discovery and exploration of the northeast coast of our continent and of the wide transverse valley of St. Lawrence to its western limits in the heart of North America. Territory not now British is, in the main, excluded from this history.

The narrative is preceded by an excellent geographical sketch, giving the general features of the regions concerned. The sketch is drawn with skill and marked by a few generalizations, clearly put and very concise, as space was evidently lacking for detailed treatment in this descriptive introduction. The following quotations will show the quality of these generalizations.

> The peculiar "V"-shaped course of the main river [St. Lawrence] valley is due to the fact that the primary Laurentian nucleus of the continent is of that shape, and, along its edge, in an alluvial valley resting on Silurian rocks, the river flows and expands into broad lakes.
>
> The characteristics of the Laurentian country, which forms and feeds the great river from the north, are very marked. It is a plateau, two or three hundred miles wide, of ancient hills or mountains 1,000 to 1,600 feet above the sea, rounded in form by the immense lapse of ages and forest-clad to their summits. Myriads of lakes connected by countless mazes of streams gather up the waters which flow down to the lower level in rapids and falls along the entire edge of the valley. At the heads of the streams and their tributaries the waters interlock so that, in the early days of the colony, the Indians would pass from one to the other and bring their furs to market by the Ottawa, St. Maurice or Saguenay, according as one or the other was free from hostile Indians.

This geographical sketch is supplemented with a fine orographical map by Bartholomew, which graphically shows these and other surface features noticed in the text.

The reason is plain why exploration in this vast region was long more vigorously and fruitfully pursued than in other parts of the continent. Explorers here met no such barrier as the ranges of the Appalachians, which so long retarded discovery farther south. They found easy access up the valley to the fresh-water seas, across the portages to other basins, and on to the Mississippi itself. These great explorations were replete with geographic and historic interest and abounded with romantic adventure; and the author tells the story well, for he is in full command of these rich resources for book-making.

He deals critically with the work and the value of the work done by each explorer along the coast and up the valley, and he follows them to the water-partings between the St. Lawrence and other rivers that go to join the Atlantic to the north or south of the St. Lawrence Basin. This inquiry leads him here and there into portions of the United States.

He deals also with the difficulties presented by the old maps and charts, portions of a number of which are reproduced. Many readers, if they will carefully peruse Chap. 1, may derive a more intelligent idea of these old productions, understand their imperfections better, and learn how they may be utilized in some ways. There was room for so excellent a book as this on the exploration of the St. Lawrence Valley.

Italy. A Popular Account of the Country, its People and its Institutions (including Malta and Sardinia). By Professor W. Deecke. With numerous Maps and Illustrations. Translated by H. A. Nesbitt, M.A. London: Swan, Sonnenschein and Co., Ltd. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1904.

As an antidote to the numerous "travel books" on Italy, as well as to those of a more specialised nature, comes this comprehensive and authoritative account of the country, its structure and surface, its resources, and its folk.

Six chapters, about one-fourth of the book, are devoted to the purely physical aspects of the country, the subjects included being Boundaries, Surrounding Seas, Relief, Geological Construction, Hydrography, and Climate. These pages form the backbone of the book, and their careful reading will well repay one who wishes an intelligent foundation for the special line of knowledge of Italy which he is following. Whoever attempts this will be disappointed at the lack of adequate maps in these chapters. This omission is all the more lamentable, as not every-one has a general map of Italy at hand on a large enough scale to enable him to follow the details of relief, construction, and topography here presented. On page 35 the author refers to "the accompanying geological map"; but this has been omitted, at least from the English translation, with great detriment to its usefulness. The introduction of numerous sketch maps and the condensing of certain technical details in Chapters IV and V would have been desirable in view of the popular character of the book.

Especially noticeable in the pages mentioned above is the scant attention the author gives to showing relations between things organic and inorganic—an omission that is surprising in a land where the responses of organic forms to their inorganic environment are so suggestive. It is, however, a satisfaction to note instances in which the correspondence between structure and topography is clearly presented, though these are not as frequent as the recent date of publication would lead us to expect. The following description of the region of the *eocene* marls is illuminating to one who remembers the railway journey from Bologna to Pistoja:

> Rounded gentle slopes, deeply cut valleys with broad pebbly bottoms and dirty muddy water, are characteristic marks of the formation. The rock crumbles after a fall of rain; it is completely broken up by frost and thus easily forms landslips—a great danger to roads and railways, and only to be remedied by alteration of route or by thorough drainage. As a rule, nothing grows on these barren slates and clays but scanty grasses, so that extensive tracks lie nearly bare, allowing free play to the rain, which generates flowing waves of mud which from time to time trouble the country near the Bologna Apennines.

And again:

> This undermining activity of the Apennine rivers is a constant source of danger to all bridges, as walls